



30 Years of Translating
Concern into Action

West Michigan Environmental Action Council

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First U.S. Lawsuit to Ban
DDT 1969

Michigan Environmental
Protection Act 1970

Inland Lakes and Streams
Act 1972

Sand Dune Protection
and Management Act
1976

Michigan Bottle Bill 1976

Solid Waste Management
Act 1978

Wetland Protection
Act 1979

Michigan Used Motor Oil
Recycling Program 1979

Hazardous Waste
Management Act 1979

Pigeon River Country
State Forest Oil Drilling
Protections 1980

Surface and Underground
Mine Reclamation Act
1982

Great Lakes Oil
Drilling Ban 1982

Peat Mining Act 1984

Chlordane Ban 1987

Statewide Combined
Sewer Overflow Policy
1988

Michigan Non Point
Source Water Pollution
Management Strategy
1988

Sand Dune Protection
Acts 1989

Oil Dumping Ban 1990

Grand River Citizen's
Watershed Council 1990

Adopt-a-Stream 1991

Project Greenspace 1992

Integrated Pest
Management 1993

West Michigan
Sustainable
Business Forum 1994

West Michigan
Greenway Council 1996

Religion, Ecology & Spirituality
Workgroup 1997

L.U.T.R.A.Q. Taskforce 1998

Lakewatch 1999

Stream Search 2000

October 18, 2001

Carol Hanlon
U. S. Department of Energy
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
(M/S #025)
P.O. Box 30307
North Las Vegas, Nevada 89036-0307

Dear Ms. Hanlon:

My organization is an environmental group with 1000 members and a history of involvement in energy-related issues. We have figured importantly in the history of environmental legislation in Secretary Abraham's home state, and we have been complimented in the Congressional Record by Representative Vernon Ehlers as "an example of how environmental groups ought to operate."

On behalf of our membership and Board of Directors, I wish to urge the Department of Energy to abandon consideration of Yucca Mountain as the country's high-level atomic waste dump.

This option is apparently moving forward for the sole reason that the Department has no other option even remotely appropriate to the purpose, so that Yucca Mountain, as bad a choice as it is, appears to be the only alternative to the status quo.

Once again we are faced with the prospect of a bad alternative being selected, not for reasons of technical superiority to anything at all, but simply because it is the only alternative that might not be immediately buried in a tidal wave of public rejection. That this is the clear intention is entirely plain to everyone. Furthermore it is born out by the deficiencies of the public comment process. All such manipulations do nothing but add to the contempt and frustration people feel with the Federal bureaucracy.

It is now critical that DOE reassess environmental impacts in light of the September 11th terrorist attacks on America and the lessons learned. Obviously we have not had a clear idea of what our vulnerabilities are. In my opinion the idea of thousands of trains and trucks conveying this deadly material through forty-three states, presents too attractive a target to potential terrorists. There is not much reason for a foreign enemy to invest in expensive biological warfare

installations in Iraq or Afghanistan if the means to kill large numbers of Americans (and render substantial landscape uninhabitable) are not only right here, but are spread out over forty-three states on a day to day basis.

The lack of substantial political support for any nuclear waste disposal alternative is a clear indication and consequence of the industry's inherently dangerous and unsustainable nature. The nuclear waste dilemma is not resolvable by any known technology or any containment strategy now envisioned. In the context of storage terms amounting to tens of thousands of years, it is absolutely idle to talk of managing the waste or achieving an acceptable level of security for the stored waste. It is just as idle to talk about foreseeing threats even one hundred years from now, let alone a thousand, ten thousand, or one hundred thousand years into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Leonard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "L".

Thomas Leonard
Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable Carl Levin, US Senate
The Honorable Debbie Stabenau US Senate
The Honorable Vern Ehlers, US House of Representatives
The Honorable Pete Hoekstra, US House of Representatives